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COMMUNICATIONS CONCERNING THE STATUS OF WOMEN

Non-confidential list of communications concerning the status of women

Note by the Secretary-General

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INTRODUCTION

1. This report presents a non-confidential list of communications concerning the status of women, submitted in accordance with the provisions of Economic and Social Council resolution 76(V) of 5 August 1947, as amended by Council resolution 304 I (XI) of 14 and 17 July 1950, and of Council resolution 1983/27 of 26 May 1983.

2. The list contains summaries of any communications received by the United Nations Office at Vienna, Division for the Advancement of Women, during the period 16 October 1989 to 31 October 1990 and by the specialized agencies, regional commissions and other United Nations bodies, together with information on any appropriate action taken.

3. The communications deal with principles relating to the promotion of women's rights in the political, economic, civil, social and educational fields.

SUMMARY OF NON-CONFIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS CONCERNING THE STATUS OF WOMEN

A. Communications concerning the status of women received by the United Nations Secretariat, United Nations Office at Vienna (Division for the Advancement of Women)

1. Communication concerning the status of women in the social, economic and cultural fields

4. A communication dated 19 June 1990 was received from Ana Cecilia Escalante, Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Costa Rica, enclosing a copy of a statement from the Comité de Unidad Campesina (CUC) (Committee of Rural Unity) of Guatemala concerning the situation of rural and indigenous women. The statement said that rural and indigenous women were suffering from injustice, maltreatment, exploitation and oppression. No recognition was accorded to the work they did on the farm, and they did not receive the same salary as men. They had no education, and most could not even speak Spanish, which led to their frequently being cheated. They were discriminated against at work, at school, in the streets and, at times, also in their homes. Many had been victims of massacre, rape, murder, torture, or threats. They were persecuted because of their indigenous dress, their language and their participation in popular movements. According to the statement, at present more than 40,000 were widows, and the authors underlined the poverty, discrimination and humiliating conditions under which widows and displaced women were living. They were allegedly trying to fight for their lives and for their culture, they were unable to find paid employment and were constantly persecuted by the army. The authors stated that they had a promising level of organization in Guatemala, which allowed women to be taken into consideration in the fields of education, health, production and culture, in the provision of daily necessities. They wished, however, to draw the attention of the Commission on the Status of Women to their dismal situation.

B. Communications concerning the status of women received by other units of the United Nations Secretariat (including the regional commissions), other United Nations bodies and the specialized agencies

5. The United Nations Office at Vienna, Division for the Advancement of Women, in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1983/27 of 26 May 1983, asked other units of the Secretariat, including the regional commissions, other United Nations bodies and the specialized agencies whether they had received any non-confidential communications concerning the status of women, together with information on subsequent action that might have been taken.

6. The following replied that they had received no such communications:

(a) United Nations Secretariat units and bodies: Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia, United Nations Centre for Human Settlement (Habitat), United Nations Environment Programme, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control, United Nations Population Fund, United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, United Nations International Crime and Justice Research Institute;

(b) Specialized agencies: International Labour Organisation, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, World Health Organization, World Intellectual Property Organization, United Nations Industrial Development Organization.